

POLICY STATEMENT RE NAMING OF PUBLIC ASSETS
(ref. Town Bylaws, Article 5.5)

Background.

Bylaw Article 5.5, adopted by the 2008 Annual Town Meeting (hereinafter “the Bylaw”), adopted a Town-wide policy governing the naming of public assets. Among many other things, the bylaw provides that no board shall name any public asset unless the board shall have adopted a naming policy. The Board of Selectmen (the Board) has thus adopted the following Policy Statement regarding the naming of Public Assets.

Policy statement

The Board of Selectmen’s policy on naming a Town asset under its jurisdiction is (1) to follow the general policy of the Town as set forth in Town Bylaw 5.5; and (2) in each particular case, to implement said town-wide policy in a transparent manner, understanding that a name given to a Town asset may have a long lasting effect, perhaps spanning many future generations of Town residents, whose perceptions and values may ebb and flow with the times. It is thus the policy of the Board of Selectmen to reserve the naming or renaming of public assets under its jurisdiction for circumstances that will best serve the interests of the Town and ensure a worthy and enduring legacy for the Town’s physical assets.

Receipt of naming proposals

Any resident may propose that a Town asset be named by the Board. Any proposal for the naming of a Town asset under the Board’s jurisdiction shall be forwarded to the Executive

Director, who shall review it and prepare the matter for review by the Board. When ready, the Executive Director shall move the matter to the Board, and recommend to approve, not to approve, or to study further. Any naming proposal by another board of a major asset under that board's jurisdiction, which the Bylaw requires shall be subject to Town Meeting approval, shall be reviewed summarily, and unless questions are presented the Board shall place the matter on a Warrant for a Town Meeting

Review analysis compliant with the requirements of the Bylaw.

In addition to the steps authorized in the bylaw, the following protocol shall apply.

1. Before undertaking to consider any naming proposal, the Bylaw itself shall be reviewed. This policy statement is supplemental to the Town-wide policy, not in substitution of it.

2. The Board shall determine whether the asset proposed for naming is, in the Bylaw's words, "a major physical asset" or "other" asset. The Board of Selectmen's policy is to view "buildings, recreational facilities, parks, water bodies, and conservation land" as major, but reserves the right to decide whether any other physical asset is major. The Bylaw requires that the naming of a major asset be presented to and approved by Town Meeting.

3. In deciding the appropriateness of a naming proposal, the Board shall keep in mind the following categories: (1) historic events, people and places; (2) outstanding individual; and (3) major gifts. These categories are more fully described in the Bylaw.

4. In studying any proposal, the Board will consider whether a naming agreement, or other documentation is appropriate. This is particularly apt if the proposal is for a time certain, and not, for example, meant to apply indefinitely into the future; or, if the naming is in consideration of a particular gift being proffered, whether there are terms which should be memorialized. If a gift is other than a gift without any conditions, the Board's policy is to memorialize the conditions, understanding that any gift to the Town is not completed without

being accepted by the Town, and any gift accepted with conditions must be utilized in accordance with any conditions attached. The Town has the right to decline a proposed gift.

5. If the proposal is to rename an asset already named, special consideration shall be given to any existing agreement or documentation regarding the current name, and then generally to the appropriateness (or not) of a new name, taking into consideration the historical significance of the existing name, any public input on changing it, any costs associated with the renaming, and any other factors which the Board deems wise to consider.

6. In naming or renaming an asset, the Board shall give consideration to equitable treatment of similar assets for similar situations. Some of the Town's history on this point was recounted in Town Counsel's October 19, 2007 letter to the Chair of the School Building Committee.

7. Where apt, including a proposal by any other board or committee to name a major asset, the Board shall consider when, and how, the proposal shall be placed on a Warrant for Town Meeting's consideration.

8. To ensure that the Board is fully aware of the public's interest in a proposal, a hearing shall be held, and a period of time for due reflection let pass, before the proposal comes on the Board's agenda for its vote.

Additional Factors to be Considered

1. A compilation of other assets named, or currently being considered for naming, by the Board and all other boards may be a useful tool in placing any proposal in context. The Board cautions against over-naming things.

2. Whether conditions beyond those proposed by any donor would be in the Town's interest.

3. The extent to which voting a current proposal could establish, or contradict, existing Town policy.

4. Whether the naming should be specifically protected forever, or be restricted as to time. The Board's ability, even Town Meeting's ability, to bind future action should be considered.

5. Whether Massachusetts law, or Town Bylaw or policy, might apply.

6. Unless the Board votes otherwise, a majority vote will apply. However, if the planned Motion to adopt a name for a Town asset has less than unanimous support among the Board's members, caution should be undertaken in bringing the proposal to a vote.

7. Whether Design Review Board should be consulted. See Town Bylaw Article 46.

8. Overall, the public interest is to be served.

In accordance with the Bylaw's requirements, this Policy Statement was

VOTED, subject to final action following the Board of Selectmen noticing and convening of a public hearing on the adoption of this policy, at its meeting held on _____, 2008.

A fully noticed public hearing on the adoption of this policy was held on _____, 2008. After hearing comments made, and after discussion, the Board of Selectmen voted to adopt the within Policy Statement at its meeting held on _____, 2008. The Board of Selectmen filed the within Policy with the Town Clerk, and posted it on the Town website on _____, 2008.

Gregory B. Mills, Chair

Barbara D. Searle, Vice Chair

Owen H. Dugan, Secretary.

Harriet S. Warshaw

Katherine L. Babson, Jr.